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BRIGHT, J. W., and MILLER, R. D., *The Elements of English Versification*. Boston : Ginn & Co., 1910.

In most of our colleges the ordinary course in "The History of English Literature" has long needed the aid of a proper text-book in the principles of English versification. Such a book must contain a fuller account of principles than can be found in the brief chapter on prosody usually appended to school and college rhetorics, but it must avoid the discussion of purely scholastic questions. It must go further than the safe ground of defining the simplest terms of prosody ; but it must not go beyond the limit of practical usefulness, into the discussion of confusing theories. The difficulty of preparing such a book has been the cause of its delay, and, perhaps, the actual appearance of such a book is the only thing that can convince many of the possibility of its production.

The Elements of English Versification, by Professors Bright and Miller, is a text-book that fulfils the requirements in a remarkable degree. It makes no pretense of discussing theories or of contributing to them ; it advances the student's knowledge into the varieties and finer points of the poet's technique ; it ingeniously avoids the statement of "half-truths" that must be unlearned later. An example of this last virtue occurs on page 60. In avoiding the discussion of the effect of accent upon quantity, the authors remark : "The usual effect of an accented syllable is that of increased force of utterance ; secondary effects, such as length or duration of the syllable or a change of pitch, may or may not in some degree accompany the force of utterance. The usual effect of an unaccented syllable is that of diminished or suppressed force of utterance." Such feats of expression are not infrequent in the book, and they must have cost the authors many a "dream." Possibly, however, the authors have not gone far enough in venturing statements that might well be made with safety. In their account of scansion and variety of verse-stress they might well have adduced and explained what Professor Gayley has emphasized as the "elocutionary pause."¹ As it is, they do not attempt

¹ See, *Rep. Eng. Com.*, vol. I, p. 510 ; *English Poetry: Principles and Progress*, p. lix.

to suggest a method of obviating the fall of the ictus upon derivative and inflectional endings, prefixes, particles, prepositions, and the like. For instance, the following line from Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon* is scanned thus (p. 64) :

That it endúres outráge, and dólorous dáy[s].

But a use of the elocutionary pause before *outrage* would give the following :

u / | u / | x / | u u / | u u / | ,

the elocutionary pause being compensated for by the emphasis laid upon *outrage*, and by the succeeding anapests. Again, the following scansion (p. 73),

In wórds, as fás[h]ions, thé same rúle will hól[d],

might be arranged more in accord with the actual rhythm as follows :

u / | u / | u x | u u / | u / | ,

assuming an elocutionary pause after *fashions*, with compensation in the following anapest. But, at any rate, the authors' method of scansion is of that simplicity beyond which there is only a confusion of unsettled theories about various kinds of pauses and substitutions. In the further interest of avoiding what seems forever debatable, only the following kinds of feet are recognized : iambic, trochaic, anapestic, dactylic, and the dactylic and anapestic peons (peon and anti-peon).

The manner of presentation is beautifully lucid and orderly. The book assumes a willingness upon the part of the reader to begin at the beginning of the subject. After a delightful chapter in which the definitions of the elements of versifications (verse, rhythm, melody, meter, foot, etc.) are gradually developed from a comparison of the verse and the sentence, the various meters are enumerated and illustrated at length. Then come chapters on the quality of sounds (where, perhaps, melody and harmony are insufficiently defined ; and tone-color unnecessarily abbreviated, although it usually tempts to undue length), and the scansion of meters. In the second part of the book is a fully illustrated description of the grouping of verses into non-stanzaic groups, stanzas, and complete poems of definite length (sonnet, ode, French forms). Everywhere the style is simple and clear. There is no vague and confusing utterance ; no figurative statement loosely doing duty for definite committal ; no

"appreciative" passages to interrupt the logical imparting of information.

Next to the dexterity in avoiding pitfalls of theories, and the clearness of presentation, one is impressed by the abundance of illustrative material. This is what makes the book exceptionally useful for college classes,—for students who learn best by examples, but who, nevertheless, must learn, finally, the principles behind the examples. Page after page of quotations affords practice to the student, and opportunity to the instructor for gently adding or subtracting whatever of principle his individual persuasion may dictate. One is glad that the authors have not held too rigidly to their expressed purpose of omitting historical material. Here and there, scattered among the illustrations, are hints of the development of 'tumbling verse,' of the caesura, and of special forms, such as the sonnet. A note might easily be added on the relation of *enjambement* (which, by the way, is not mentioned) in Chaucer and the Elizabethans, to the 'end-stop' of the eighteenth century. Again, much vista, if not knowledge—much arousing of a student's interest and curiosity, if not filling of his emptiness—might be gained by half-sentences referring, by the way, to remoter or different problems, such as the conjectural origin of verse-rhythm in the choral-dance, or our illogical inheritance of the names of the classical "quantity" feet, or the dependence of the art of verse upon the nature of its material—sound—as compared with the dependance of the other arts upon *their* materials.

As a whole, this text-book will be a very great aid to those who believe that the history of literature should involve an understanding of the "underlying technicalities of the more external side of poetry." The cleverness and the truth of the book, and its clearness and fullness, in dealing with this difficult and too often neglected side of poetry, entitle it to a most hearty welcome from those who wish to teach facts rather than theory.

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Syntax of the French Verb, by EDWARD C. ARMSTRONG ; with exercises by DE LA WARR B. EASTER. New York, Henry Holt and Co., 1909. 12mo, 192 pp.

Le livre de M. Armstrong, qui est accompagné d'exercices et muni d'un vocabulaire, pourra être employé avec profit dans l'enseignement du thème et de la composition, mais l'auteur s'est proposé encore une autre fin : il a voulu en faire un guide que les étudiants avancés pussent consulter en cas de difficulté et qui leur fournit chaque fois la solution de leurs doutes. Il nous a donc donné un exposé méthodique et raisonné des règles complexes qui gouvernent en français la syntaxe du verbe. C'est précisément cet exposé que je voudrais examiner ici.

M. Armstrong écrit pour des lecteurs américains, et c'est donc la syntaxe du verbe français telle qu'elle apparaît à un étudiant de langue anglaise, qu'il va analyser devant nous. Point de vue très légitime en l'espèce et de plus méthode très efficace : les faits du langage, pris ainsi de biais, se détachent avec une tout autre netteté. Cela ne veut pas dire que l'entreprise de M. Armstrong ait été aisée. Il a été très ambitieux : rompant avec une tradition commode mais détestable, il a prétendu étudier, non pas je ne sais quelle langue indéterminée qui de Malherbe à Anatole France serait par une surprenante fiction restée toujours identique à elle-même, mais bien le langage même de nos contemporains. Sa syntaxe est une syntaxe du verbe dans le français des cinquante dernières années. Il lui a donc fallu se défier de l'archaïsme, lui faire une chasse incessante. La langue de Zola n'est pas celle de Bossuet ni même celle de Balzac, et les électeurs de la troisième République ne parlent plus comme les sujets du grand roi, ou même les contemporains de Louis-Philippe. Mais pour sentir et faire valoir ces différences, il faut de la lecture et un sens pénétrant de la langue. Ni l'un ni l'autre ne manquent à M. Armstrong, et il me semble qu'il s'est glissé fort peu d'archaïsmes dans son livre. Et c'est sans doute une chose assez nouvelle dans une grammaire française.

Ce n'est pas là le seul obstacle que le plan de l'auteur l'ait forcé à surmonter. Le français des cinquante dernières années ne forme pas un